



TOWN OF ARLINGTON

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING &
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: Laura Wiener, Acting Director of Planning & Community Development

Cc:

From: Ted Fields, Economic Development Planner

Date: January 4th, 2016

Re: Minutes, Master Plan Implementation Committee, First Meeting – 10/29/2015

Present members: Adam Chapdelaine, Joseph Barr, Andrew Bunnell, Michael Byrne, Peter Howard, Charles Kalaskas, Ann Leroyer, Wendy Richter & Ralph Wilmer

Absent members: Andrew West

Present staff: Laura Wiener, Ted Fields, David Fields & Joey Glushko

Acting Planning Director Laura Wiener convened the meeting by asking Committee members to introduce themselves, and then briefly summarized the recent adoptions of the Arlington 2015 Master Plan and the process behind the formation of the Committee. Ms. Wiener then outlined the Master Plan's recommendations, which fall into three categories: Critical, Important and Less Important. Critical recommendations should be undertaken immediately, important recommendations should be started within the next two years and less important ones can be accomplished within the next five years.

Three Master Plan recommendations are considered critical for immediate implantation by approval in the 2016 Town Meeting:

1. Addition of language into Arlington's existing zoning by-law permitting mixed-use development in commercial districts;
2. Modification of parking requirements for mixed-use developments in commercial districts;
3. Modification of current dimensional and density requirements in Residential 0, 1 and 2 zoning districts.

Michael Byrne stated that developing a mix of commercial and residential uses under existing zoning is hampered by restrictive parking and open space requirements. Peter Howard asked about the fate of mixed-use zoning amendments proposed by the Redevelopment Board in 2012. Adam Chapdelaine responded that the Town did not have a Master Plan in 2012 to document the benefits of mixed-use development in commercial districts and to respond to critics' arguments against the proposed zoning amendments. Mr. Chapdelaine asked if the proposed amendments to parking requirements would be confined to business zones; Ms. Wiener confirmed that they would be.

Ms. Wiener then advised the Committee that the Town's existing zoning by-law should be modernized and "cleaned-up" over the next two years by a process of editing and rewriting termed "recodification". This process would provide a more coherent foundation for making more fundamental changes to business and industrial zoning districts and signage regulations. Ralph Wilmer advised that the cost for basic editing of the existing by-law will be lower than for a more comprehensive recodification involving both editing and improvement of the current regulations. Peter Howard asked if the Town was budgeting funds to undertake recodification, Adam Chapdelaine replied that funds were being budgeted.

After this discussion, Ms. Wiener summarized less pressing Master Plan recommendations, including strengthening demolition delay regulations for historic properties and increasing the amount of bicycle parking required in new developments. Wendy Richter asked if the Committee's role was to recommend Master Plan amendments for approval by Town Meeting. Adam Chapdelaine (the Town Manager) replied that the Committee was formed to work with the Redevelopment Board to recommend zoning amendments to Town Meeting. Joe Barr advised the Committee to compile a steady, practical schedule for implementing Master Plan recommendations. Adam Chapdelaine (the Town Manager) recommended that the Committee advocate for incremental zoning amendments that would achieve desirable changes as part of a five or ten year work plan.

The Committee then turned to the election of a Chair and Vice Chair. Charles Kalauskas and Joe Barr were unanimously approved respectively as Chair and Vice Chair. Finally, discussion turned to the formation of sub-groups to explore critical issues outlined in the Master Plan. The Committee ultimately decided to form three working groups to examine residential zoning changes, mixed-use zoning amendments and historic preservation provisions. The Residential Working Group will have Wendy Richter, Michael Byrne, Joe Barr and Ann Leroyer as members, with staff from the Planning and Inspectional Services Department s (Laura Wiener, Rick Vallerelli, Ted Fields & David Fields). The Mixed-Use Working Group will have Charles Kalauskas, Ralph Wilmer , Michael Byrne and Joe Barr as members, with Ms. Wiener, Ted Fields and David Fields providing staff support. The Historic Preservation Working Group will have Ann Leroyer, Peter Howard and Wendy Richter as members.

The Committee approved a motion to adjourn after approving January 14th, 2016 as the next meeting date.